

## THE DAILY PUBLIC LEDGER

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## SHAMS IN THE RUG TRADE.

A New York trade report states that orders for rugs and carpets are coming in from all over the country. And prices are advancing, due to scarcity of colorings and other material. Housewives look forward in spring to the bright and clean effect of a new floor coverings with keen anticipation. The man of the place is sympathetic, but peturbed about costs. He will be more so this year.

There are pretenses and shams in the rug trade which people should know more about. Many persons have been paying high prices without getting what they supposed. The craze for oriental rugs, the notion that they are necessary for artistic house interiors, has upset many thrifty plans of economy.

Formerly oriental rug making was in the hands of people having a well trained sense for beauty of color and appropriateness of design. As the market was artificially stimulated from this country, the majority of the old world rug makers commercialized their business. They turned out a more hasty product, bought rugs regardless of merit to fill the eager demand. Anything went, at a big price, too. The oriental colors are usually good, but in design a great many of the rugs are coarse and grotesque. And today many American makers are imitating their faults of bold and staring design, without being able to copy their beauty of colorings.

It is amusing to see a lot of the Newly Rich come rolling down to the big city emporiums, buying these costly fabrics right and left. They return rejoicing, believing they have acquired things that will stamp them as persons of cultivated discrimination. But to those who know, their spoils are very often incongruous and tawdry. Frequently they are inferior in taste to far less expensive material formerly turned out by our home producers.

Buy rugs of some one you know, who understands the inwardness of the business.

## NO PROHIBITORY TARIFF DESIRED.

The New York Journal of Commerce publishes a special from Washington which attempts to show a change of attitude among certain interests throughout the country on the subject of the tariff. "The old style demand for practically prohibitory protection is growing weaker in many sections," says the article, "and in some quarters is disappearing." It is doubtful if any such demand ever seriously existed. The American sentiment for protection to domestic industries, as represented in the legislation of the Republican party, has never been for absolute prohibition of imports.

A fair adjustment of duty rates which would give our producers an even break in their home market is what they have asked. The Republican party has always placed its chief reliance for revenue on the protective tariff—a tax paid chiefly by the foreigner and which is of general benefit to the country. Obviously the levying of extortionate rates would result in the loss of this revenue to the extent that the rates were prohibitive, and Republican tariff laws have been remarkably good revenue producers.

The Underwood law was characterized by its framers as a "competitive" measure. It is, to the limit, under it 74 per cent of our imports are coming in free, and the average duty rate now hovers around 8 per cent. As a revenue producer it is a failure, and the Democrats are now suggesting fifty-seven varieties of taxation to bolster it up.

The change of attitude on the tariff, where it exists, is in the direction of the Republican protective idea. This change has been most marked in the south, which, if it could vote on the tariff today, would show a huge majority for the protective policy.

Senator Taggart, says a dispatch from Washington, can have his choice of two chairmanships—of the committee on woman suffrage or the committee on forest reservation and the protection of game; and, it adds, "he will probably take the latter"—being, as always, the wise little guy.

General Villa has been killed so many times we can't see why the cuss don't stay dead.



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## Stingaree

BY E. W. HORNUNG.

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## THE MOTH AND THE STAR.

DARLINGHURST JAIL, had never known a more interesting prisoner than the back block bandit, who was tried and convicted under the strange style and title which he had made his own. Not even in prison was his real name ever known, and the wild speculations of some imaginative officials were nothing else up to the end. There was enough color in their wildness, however, to crown the convict with a certain halo of romance, which his behavior in jail did nothing to dispel. That, of course, was exemplary, since Stingaree had never been a fool, but it was something more and rarer. Not content simply to follow the line of least resistance, he exhibited from the first a spirit and a philosophy unique indeed beneath the broad arrow, and so far from decreasing with the years of his captivity, these attractive qualities won him friend after friend among the officials and privilege upon privilege at their hands, while amply justifying the romantic interest in his case.

At last there came to Sydney a person more capable of an acute appreciation of the heroic villain than his most ardent admirer on the spot. Lucius Brady was a long haired Irishman of letters, hard and bookworm, rebel and reviewer. In his ample leisure he was also the most enthusiastic criminologist in London, and as president of an exceedingly exclusive society for the cultivation of criminals, even from London did he come for a prearranged series of interviews with the last and the most distinguished of all the bush rangers.

It was to Lucius Brady, his biographer to be, that Stingaree confided the data of all the misdeeds recounted in these pages, but of his life during the quiet intervals of his relations with confederates and his more honest dealings with honest folk of which many a pretty tale was rife he was not to be persuaded to speak without an irritating reserve.

"Keep to my points of contact with the world, about which something is known already, and you shall have the whole truth of the matter," said the convict. "But I don't intend to give away the altogether unknown, and I doubt if it would interest you if I did. The most interesting thing to me has been the different types with whom I have had what it pleases you to term professional relations and the very different ways in which they have taken me. You read character by flashlight along the barrel of your revolver. What you should do is to hunt up my various victims and get at their point of view. You really mustn't press me to hark back to mine. As it is, you bring a whiff of the outer world, which makes me bristle my wings against the bars."

The criminologist gazed over such speeches from such lips. It would have touched another to note what an irresistible fascination the bars had for the wings despite all pain.

Lucius Brady's interest in Stingaree was exclusively intellectual. His heart never ached for a roving spirit in confinement. It did not occur to him to suppress a detail of his own days in Sydney, down to the attractions of an Italian restaurant he had discovered near the jail, the favor of the Chianti and so forth. On the contrary, it was most interesting to note the play of features in the tortured man, who, after all, brought his torture on himself by asking so many questions. Soon, when his visitor left him, the bondman could follow the free in all but the flesh through every corridor of the prison and every street outside, to the hotel where you read the English papers on the veranda or to the little restaurant where the Chianti was corked with oil, which the waiter removed with a wisp of tow.

At the most interesting moments in the meetings of the highly intellectual societies Lucius Brady would rise and declare, "I'm going on a little jaunt to the prison to call on Stingaree."

One day late in the afternoon, as Lucius Brady was beaming on him through his spectacles and indulging in an incisive criticism on the champagne at Governor House, Stingaree quietly greeted him. A gas was in all readiness, likewise strips of coarse sheeting torn up for the purpose in the night. Black in the face, but with breath still in his body, the criminologist was carefully gagged and tied down to the bedstead, while his living image (at a casual glance) stroled with bent head, black sombrero, spectacles and frock coat first through the cold corridors and presently along the streets.

The heat of the pavement striking to his soles was the first of a hundred exquisite sensations, but Stingaree did not permit himself to savor one of them. Indeed, he had his work cut out to check the pace his heart dictated, and it was by an admirable exercise of the will that he wandered along, deep to all appearance in a Camelot classic which he had found in the criminologist's pocket, in reality blinded by the glasses, but all the more vigilant out of the corner of his eyes.

A suburb was the scene of these perambulations. Had he but dared to lift his face Stingaree might have caught a glimpse of the bluest of blue water, and his prison eyes hungered for the sight, but he would not raise his eyes so long as footsteps sounded on the same pavement. By taking judicious turnings, however, he drifted into a quiet road, with gray suburban bungalows on one side and building lots on the other. No step approached. He could look up at last. And the very bungalow that he was passing was shut up, yet furnished. The people had merely gone away for a few days, servants and all.

He saw it at a glance from the newspapers plastering the windows which caught the sun. In an instant he was in the garden, and in another he had forced a side gate leading by an alley to back yard and kitchen door. But for many minutes he went no farther

than this gate, behind which he cowered, prepared with excuses in case he had already been observed.

It was at this interval that Stingaree recalled the season with a thrill, for it was Christmas week, and without a doubt the house would be empty till the new year.

Here was one port for the storm that must follow his escape. And a very pleasant port he found it on entering after due pre-arranged delay.

Clearly the abode of young married people, the bungalow was fitted and furnished with a taste which appealed almost painfully to Stingaree. The drawing room was draped in sheets, but the walls carried a few good engravings, some of which he remembered with a shudder. It was the dressing room, however, that he wanted, and the dressing room made him rub his hands. The dainty establishment had no more luxurious corner what with the fitted bath, circular shaving glass, packed trousers press, a row of boots on trees and a fine old wardrobe full of hanging coats. Stingaree began by selecting his suit, and it may have been his vanity or a strange longing to look for once what he once had been, but he could not resist the young man's excellent evening clothes.

"This fellow comes from home," said he, "and they are spending their Christmas pretty far back, or he would have taken these with him."

He had wallowed in the highly enamored bath and was looking for a towel when he saw his head in the shaving glass. He was dry enough before he could think of anything else. There was a dilemma, obvious, yet unforeseen—that shaven head! Purple and fine linen could not disguise the convict's crop. A wig was the only hope, but to wear a wig one must first try it on—and let the perwigger call the police. The knot was Gordian. And yet desperately as Stingaree sought unravelment he was at the same time subconsciously as deep in a study of a face so unfamiliar that at first he had scarcely known it for his own. It was far leaner than of old. It was no longer richly tanned.

The mouth called louder than ever for a mustache. The hair, what there was of it, seemed iron gray. It had certainly receded considerably at the temples.

Stingaree when he left the house in evening clothes had no money, but he had a handsome pair of opera glasses, which he converted into change on the gratuitous plea that he had forgotten his purse at the first pawnbroker's on the confines of the city. The pawnbroker talked Greek to him at once.

"It's a pity you won't be able to see 'er, sir, as well as 'er 'er," said he.

"Perhaps they have them on hire in the theater," replied Stingaree at a venture. The pawnbroker's face instantly advised him that his observation was wide of the obscure mark.

"The theater! You won't 'er 'er at any theater in Sydney, nor yet in the southern hemisphere. Town 'alls is the only lay for 'ilda Bourverie out 'ere."

At first the name conveyed nothing to Stingaree, yet it was not wholly unfamiliar.

"Of course," said he. "The town hall I meant."

The pawnbroker leered as he put down a sovereign and a shilling.

"What a season she's 'aving, sir?"

"Ah, what a season!"

And Stingaree wagged his opera hat head.

"Undreds of pounds' worth of flowers flung on to every platform and not a dry eye in the place!"

"I know," said the feeling Stingaree.

"It's wonderful to think of this 'ere colony producing the world's best primer dinner!"

"It is, indeed."

"When you think of 'er start."

"That's true."

The pawnbroker leaned across his counter and leered more than ever in his customer's face.

"They say she ain't no better than she ought to be."

"Really?"

"It's right, too, but what can you expect of a primer dinner whose fortune was made by a bloodthirsty bushranger like that there Stingaree?"

"You little scurriously wretch," cried the bushranger and flung out of the shop that second.

It was a miracle. He remembered everything now. Then he had done the world a service as well as the woman. He gave thanks for the guinea in his pocket and asked his way to the town hall, and as he marched down the middle of the lighted streets the first flock of newboys came flying in his face.

"Escape of Stingaree! Escape of Stingaree! Cowardly outrage on famous author! Escape of Stingaree!"

The damp pink papers were in the hands of the overflow crowd outside the hall. His own name was already in every mouth, continually coupled with that of the world renowned Hilda Bourverie. It did not deter the convict from elbowing his way through the mass that gloated over his deed exactly as they would have gloated over his destruction on the gallows. "I have my ticket; I have been detained," he told the police, and at the last line of defense he whispered, "A guinea for standing room." And the guinea got it.

It was the interval between parts one and two. He thought of that other interval, when he had made such a different entry at the same juncture. The other concert room would have gone some fifty times into this. All at once fell a hush and then a rising thunder of applause, and some one requested Stingaree to remove his hat. He did so, and a cold creeping of the shaved flesh reminded him of his general position and of this particular peril. But no one took any notice of him or of his head. And it was not Hilda Bourverie this time. It was a plaudite in violent indignation and elaborate lace, whose performance also was loud and uproarious. Followed a beautiful young baritone whom Miss Bourverie had brought from London in her pocket for the tour. He sang three little songs very charmingly indeed, but there was no encore. The gods were burning for their own. Perfumery plaudits died to a dramatic pause.

And then, and then, amid deafening salvoes a dazzling vision appeared upon the platform, came forward with the carriage of a conscious queen, stood bowing and beaming in the glare and glitter of fabric and of gem that were

yet less radiant than herself. Stingaree stood transfixed between stamping feet and clapping hands. No; he would never have connected this magnificent woman with the simple bush girl in the unpretentious frocks that he recalled as clearly as her former self. He had looked for less fiery, less physical development, less indeed of the grand operatic tout ensemble. But acting ended with her smile, and much of the old innocent simplicity came back as the lips parted in song. And her song had not been spoiled by riches and adulation. Her song had not sacrificed sweetness to artifice. There was even more than the old mangle in her song.

Is this a dream?  
Then waking would be pain!  
Oh, do not wake me!  
Let me dream again.

It was no new number even then; even Stingaree had often heard it and heard great singers go the least degree flat upon the first "dream." He listened critically. Hilda Bourverie was not one of the delinquents. Her intonation was as perfect as that of the great violinists, her high notes had the rare quality of the E string finely touched. It was a flawless, if a purely popular, performance; and the musical heart of one listener in that crowded room was too full for mere applause. She had to yield; she yielded with a winning grace. And the first bars of the new song set one full heart beating, so that the earlier words were lost upon his brain.

She ran before me in the meads,  
And down this world worn track  
She leads me on, but while she leads  
She never gives me back.

And yet her voice is in my dreams,  
To which me more and more,  
That wailing voice! Ah, me, it seems  
Less near me than of yore!

Lightly I sped when hope was high,  
And youth beguiled the chase;  
I follow—follow still, but I  
Shall never see her face.

So the song ended, and in the ultimate quiet the need of speech came over Stingaree.

"The Unrealized Ideal," he informed a neighbor.

"Rather!" rejoined the man, treating the stale news as a mere remark. "We never let her off without that."

"I suppose not," said Stingaree.

"It's the song the bushranger forced her to sing at the back block concert, and it made her fortune. Good old Stingaree!"

"You don't happen to know where Hilda Bourverie is staying, I suppose?" asked the bushranger. "I've met her once or twice, and I might call."

The other smiled as on some suicidal moth.

"There's only one place good enough for a star like her in Sydney."

"And that is?"

"Government house."

His excellency of the moment was a young nobleman of sporting proclivities and your true sportsman's breadth of mind. He was immensely popular with all sects and sections but the aggressively puritanical and the narrowly austere. It was the obvious course for such a governor and his kindred lady to insist upon making the great Miss Bourverie their guest for the period of her professional sojourn in the capital, and a semi-bohemian supper at the government house was but a characteristic finale to her first great concert.

The prima donna sat on the governor's right, and at the proper point his excellency sang her praises in a charmingly informal speech, which delighted and amused the press men, actors and actresses whom he had collected for the occasion.

A charming suit of rooms had been placed at the disposal of the prima donna. The boudoir was like a hot-house with the floral offerings of the evening, already tastefully arranged by madam's own Swiss maid. But she walked straight through to her bedroom and sank with a sigh into the armchair before the glass.

"Who brought this?" she asked, peevishly picking a twisted note from amid the golden furniture of her toilet table.

"I never saw it until this minute, madam," the Swiss maid answered in dismay. "It was not there ten minutes ago, I am sure, madam!"

"Where have you been since?"

"Down to the servants' hall, for one minute, madam."

Miss Bourverie read the note, and was an animated being in three seconds.

"I am tired of you, Lena," cried madam. "You let people bring notes into my room, and you say you were only out of it a minute. Be good enough to leave me for the night. I can look after myself for once!"

The maid protested, wept, but was expelled, and a key turned between them; then Hilda Bourverie read her note again.

Escaped this afternoon. Came to your concert. Hiding in boudoir. Give me five minutes or raise alarm, which you please. STINGAREE.

A touch to her hair, a glance in the pier glass, and all for a notorious convict, broken prison! So into the boudoir with her grandest air; but again she locked the door behind her, and, sweeping round, beheld a man in immaculate evening clothes profoundly bowing to her.

"Are you the writer of a note found on my dressing table?" she demanded, every syllable off the ice.

"I am."

"Then who are you, besides being an impudent forger?"

"You name the one crime I never committed," said he. "I am Stingaree."

And they gazed in each other's eyes, but not yet were hers to be believed.

"He only escaped this afternoon."

"I am he."

And he drew nearer, but she looked all the harder.

"Yes, I begin to remember your face, but it has changed."

"It has gazed on prison walls for many years."

"Now I know," she cried. "You did me a service years ago. I am not to forget it!"

"It is not I who have kept it before your mind."

"Perhaps not. But that's why you come to me tonight."

(To be continued)

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